

Investigation of Inclusive Education for Refugees in Social Studies Course

Özkan Akman

Süleyman Demirel University, Turkey,  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8264-3178>

Abstract: Refugees refer to people around the world who have been forced to leave their country and settle in a new society due to human rights violations, conflicts or forced migration. Refugee children are often a special group that needs to be integrated into education systems. Social Studies can be used as a part of inclusive education for refugees. The purpose of this study is to examine the practices of inclusive education for refugees in Social Studies, to evaluate the effects of this education and to understand the experiences of teachers, students and refugees. The research was conducted with the content analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods. The data were interpreted with descriptive analysis technique. According to the data obtained; it shows the presence of teachers who develop inclusive course content for refugees in Social Studies courses. This can include stories about the refugee experience, visual materials and activities to develop social awareness. Inclusive education for refugees supports students to understand and empathize with the challenges faced by refugees. This is seen to contribute to raising social awareness. It is important that teachers need training and support to improve their inclusive education practices for refugees. It is important to train teachers more in this area and facilitate their access to resources. It is thought that the participation of refugees in Social Studies lessons will help them feel more integrated and adapt to the new society. Teachers need to be supported to develop and implement this training. There is also a need for further research and resource development to understand the experiences of refugee children and support their integration process.

Keywords: Refugee, Social Studies, Education.

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Introduction

Millions of people around the world have become refugees, leaving their homes due to wars, natural disasters, political difficulties or economic reasons (Gindling & Poggio, 2012). Refugees have become an important component of societies and education systems. In this context, education for refugees is of great international importance (Harding & Wigglesworth, 2005). The social studies course plays an important role in providing students with the skills to understand and evaluate social issues. In this article, the importance and effects of inclusive education for refugees in social studies courses will be analyzed and the possible studies on this subject will be focused (Taylor & Sidhu, 2012).

Refugee Problem and Education

The refugee problem is a global issue, not just a problem of specific countries. Refugee children often live under harsh conditions and face various barriers to accessing their right to education (Stewart, 2012). Therefore, access to education for refugee children and promoting inclusion in education is critical for inter-communal cohesion and long-term success.

Refugees are individuals in need of protection who have been forced to flee their countries due to humanitarian crises, wars, natural disasters and other emergencies around the world. Education for refugees is critical for their integration into new societies and rebuilding their lives. As social studies is a subject that provides students with the opportunity to understand social issues, cultures, histories, and human rights, it is important to examine how inclusive education for refugees is addressed within this subject (Johnson et al., 2022; Naidoo, 2015; Schreder et al., 2023).

Social Studies Lesson and Refugee Problem

The social studies course aims to equip students with the skills to better understand and influence their society and the world. Understanding and solving the refugee problem should be a core component of the social studies course. By addressing the refugee issue, social studies can benefit students in the following areas: (Sidhu & Taylor, 2007).

1. Empathy and Human Rights: Students who are informed about the challenges faced by refugees can be more sensitive to developing empathy and respect for human rights (Short & Boyson, 2012).
2. Cultural Diversity and Social Cohesion: Understanding the cultural contexts from which refugee students come can promote respect for cultural diversity and enhance social cohesion (Naidoo, 2013).
3. Active Citizenship: Students who are aware of the refugee issue can adopt an active citizenship as future leaders.

The Importance of Inclusive Education for Refugees

1. Human Rights Awareness: The social studies course addresses fundamental issues such as human rights and justice. Inclusive education for refugees teaches students to respect human rights and empathize with different cultures (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015).
2. Social Sensitivity: Refugee crises are social problems. The social studies course provides students with the skills to understand and solve such problems (Harushimana Ikpeze, & Mthethwa-Sommers, 2013).

3. Respect for Cultural Differences: Refugees are individuals from different cultures. Social studies teaches students to appreciate cultural diversity and to live harmoniously with different cultures (Mthethwa-Sommers & Kisiara, 2015).

Inclusive Education and Social Studies Lesson

Inclusive education for refugees in social studies aims to respect the learning needs of each student and cater to different groups of learners (Harding, & Wigglesworth, 2005). This kind of education encourages refugee students and other students to learn together. Inclusive education can be integrated into the social studies classroom in the following ways: (Naidoo, 2013).

1. Sensitization and Awareness: Teachers can incorporate examples of the refugee issue and the difficulties in accessing education for refugee children into lesson materials.
2. Interactive Learning: Students can be provided with interactive learning opportunities, such as group projects and discussions, to better understand the refugee issue (Naidoo, 2013).
3. Resources and Support: Providing additional resources and support for refugee students can help them succeed in social studies lessons (Harding, & Wigglesworth, 2005).

Method

This research was prepared using content analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods. The study group of the research was carried out with 13 pre-service social studies teachers studying at Süleyman Demirel University Faculty of Education. The data were collected through a structured interview form. The collected data were subjected to content analysis.

Results

1. Curriculum Arrangements: The social studies curriculum can include a special section or topic on refugees. This creates an opportunity to present refugee issues and refugee stories to students.
2. Refugee Guest Speakers: Schools can invite refugees to share their experiences with students. This helps students develop empathy by hearing real life stories of refugees.
3. Classroom Activities: Social studies lessons provide opportunities for students to examine refugee stories, discuss human rights issues and engage with key concepts such as freedom, equality and justice.

4. Development of Social Consciousness: Giving students the opportunity to understand the challenges and discrimination faced by refugees helps them develop their social consciousness.

Conclusion

Social studies can be an important component of inclusive education for refugees. Such education can help students to understand the refugee problem, develop empathy and respect for human rights. It can also help refugee students to participate more effectively in social studies lessons. Educators can make positive changes in education for refugees by conducting more research on this issue and developing inclusive education practices. The refugee issue is an important opportunity for social responsibility and equality, and social studies can guide students in this regard. Inclusive education for refugees contributes to the development of students' awareness of being a citizen of the world and raises individuals who are more sensitive to the solution of social problems. Therefore, more research and studies should be conducted on the importance and applicability of inclusive education for refugees in the social studies course.

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